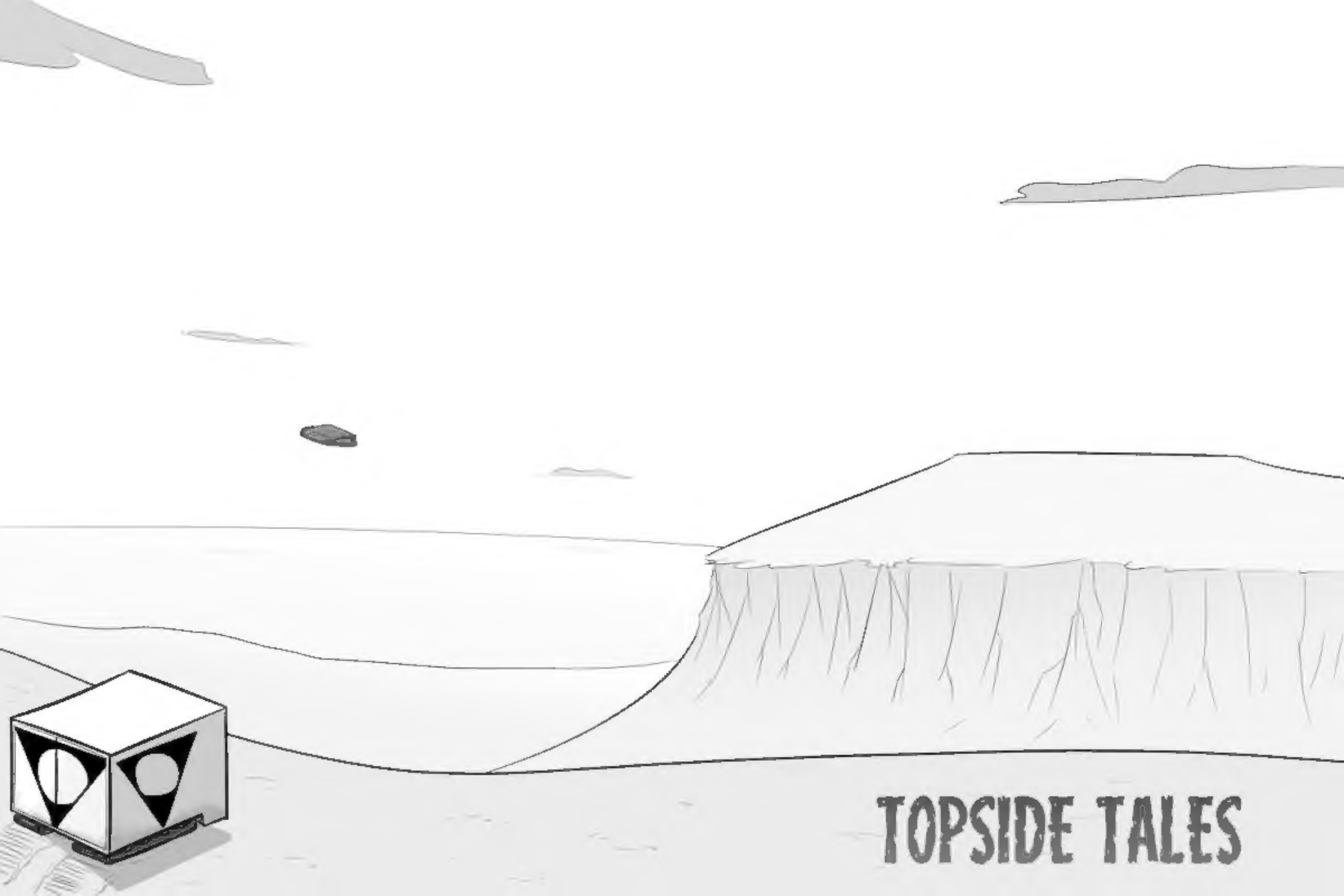
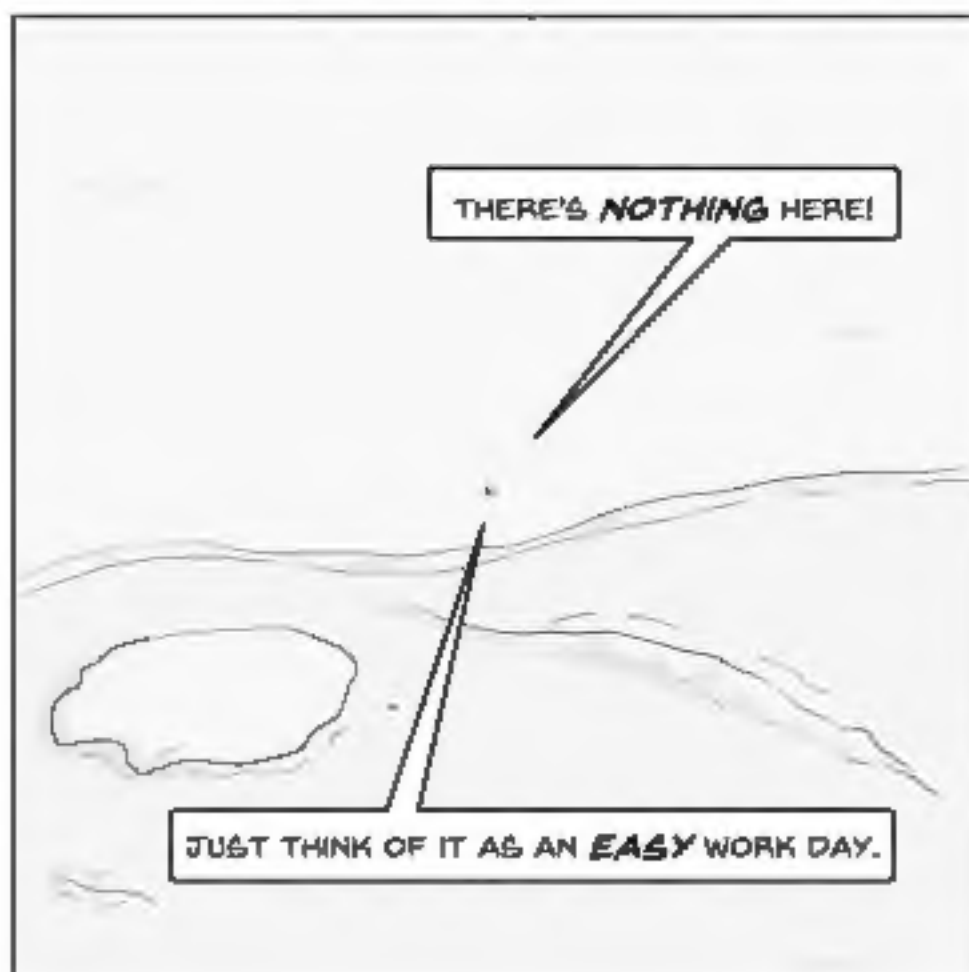
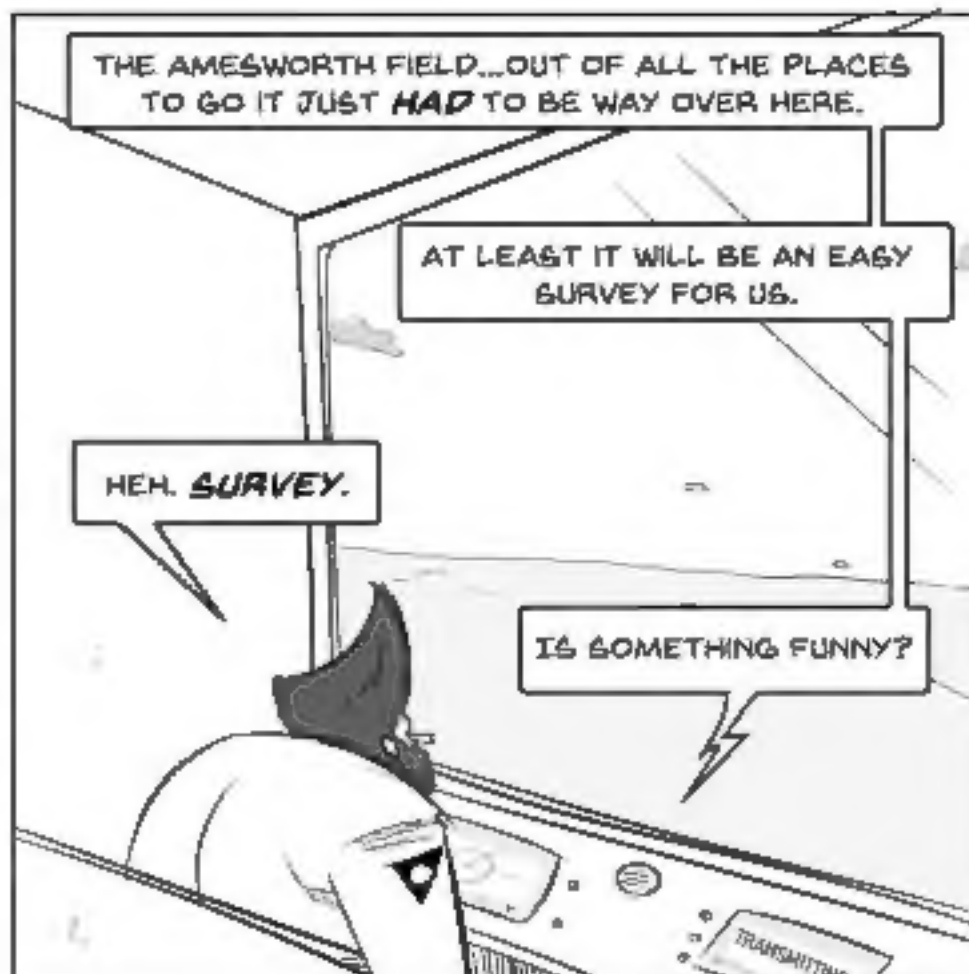
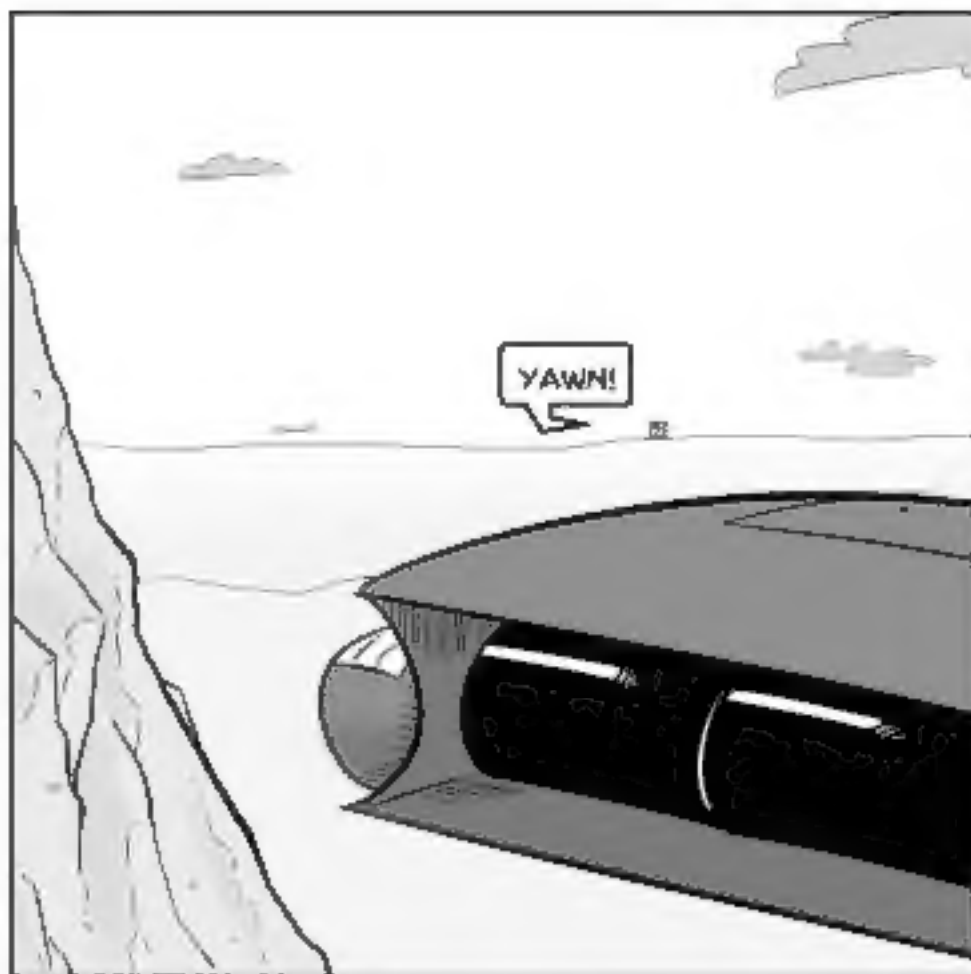




TOPSIDE TALES



WITH US POSITIONED IN THE CENTER OF THE FIELD
THIS SHOULD SPEED ALONG THE SCAN.

HOW **LONG** IS
IT GOING TO
TAKE?

IT WILL TAKE APPROXIMATELY **TWO HOURS** TO
FINISH THE FULL SCAN OF THE AMESWORTH FIELD
AND AN **EXTRA** HOUR TO PROCESS AND
COMPARE THE DATA TO THE LAST SURVEY.

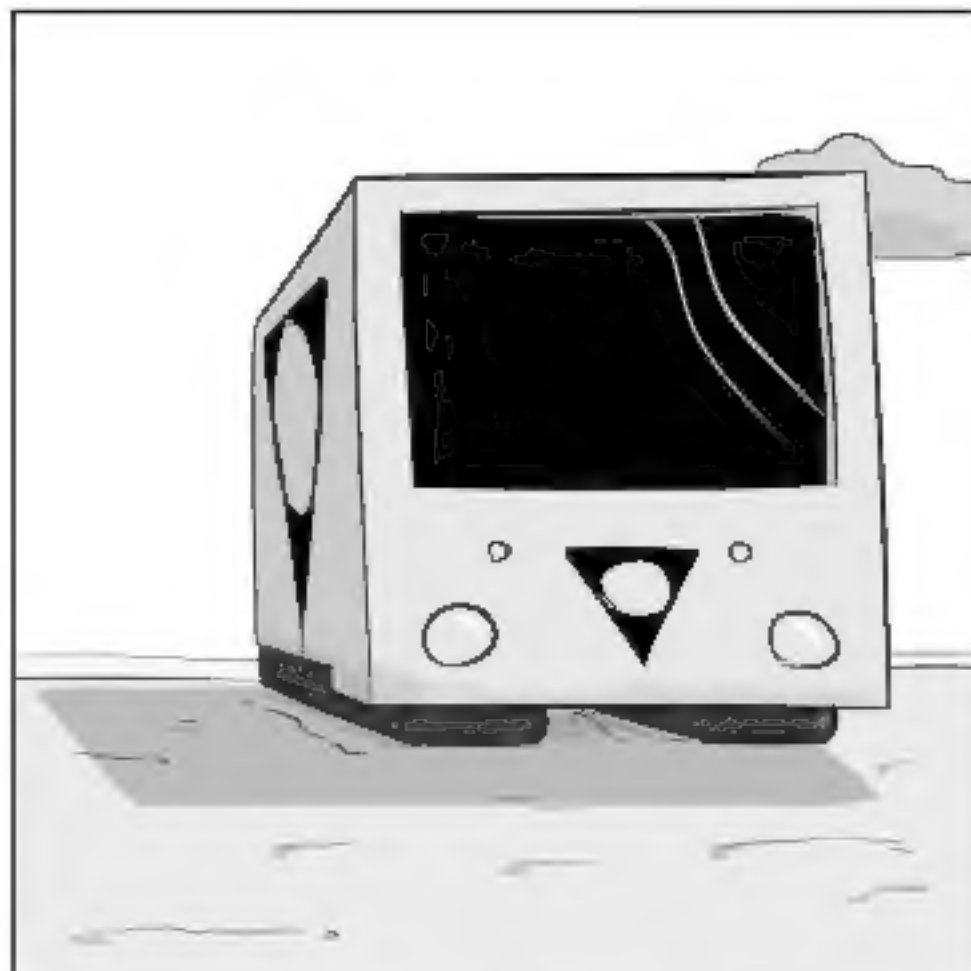
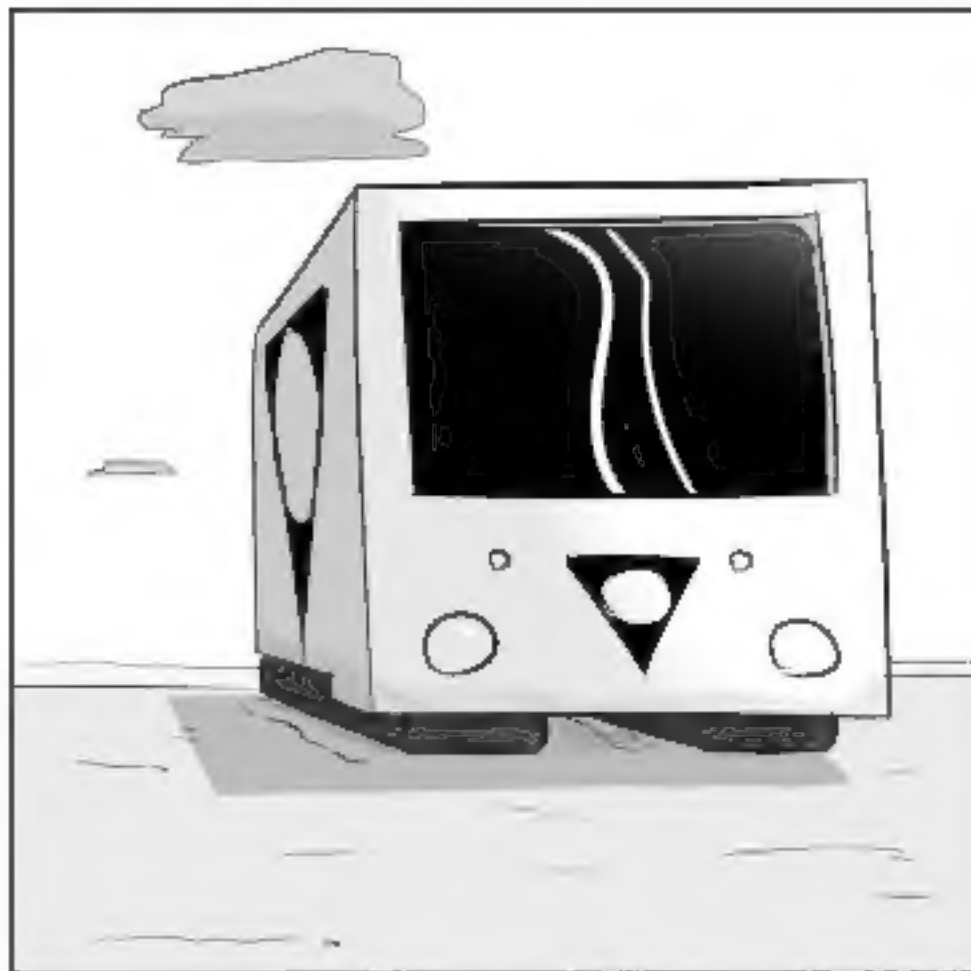
GREAT...

IT'S **NECESSARY** TO STUDY THE FIELD'S
MOVEMENT FOR SAFETY'S SAKE. IF THE DATA
IS NOT UP TO DATE THE NEXT CREW COULD
VAPORIZE WHEN THEY VISIT THE FIELD.

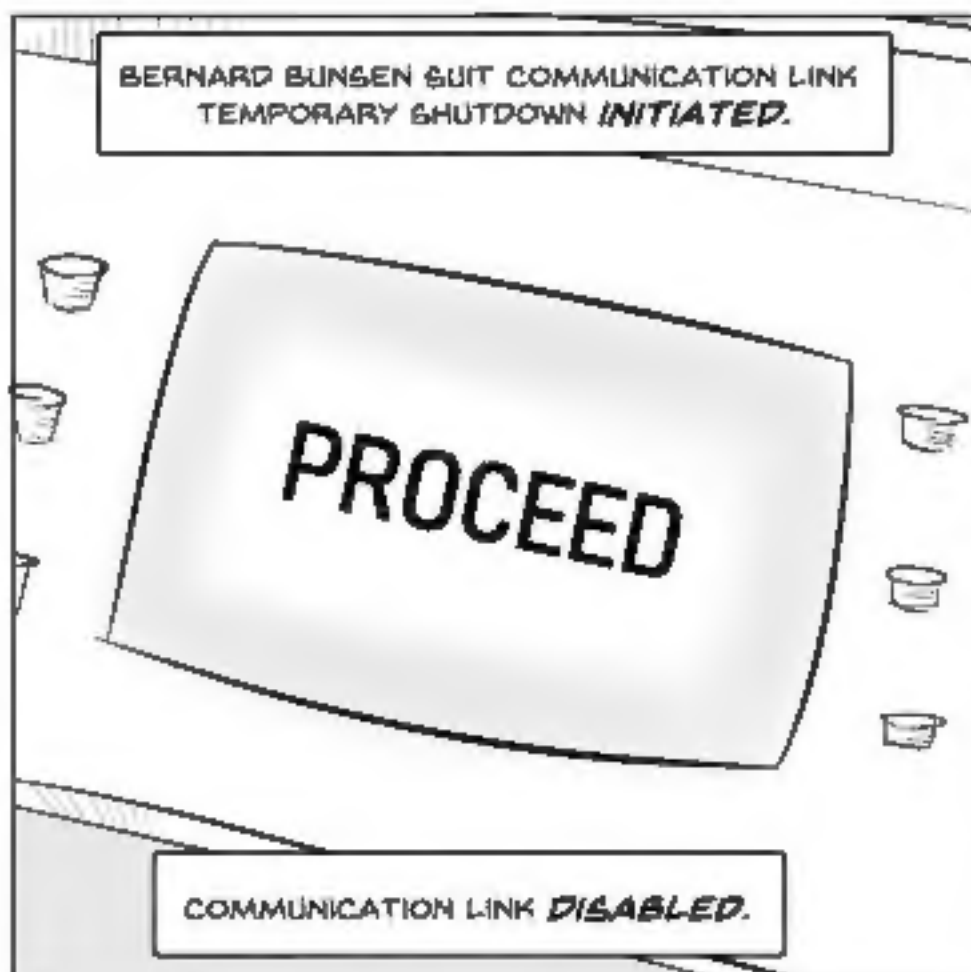
IT'S A GOOD THING THE DATA WAS RIGHT
FOR US THEN, BUT **THREE HOURS?**

BAH. I'M GOING TO GO CATCH A NAP.

UNDERSTOOD. SLEEP WELL BERNARD.



BERNARD BUNSEN SUIT ANALYSIS: NORMAL.
STATUS: HEALTHY. UNCONSCIOUS.



BERNARD BUNSEN SUIT COMMUNICATION LINK
TEMPORARY SHUTDOWN *INITIATED*.

COMMUNICATION LINK *DISABLED*.

BERNARD BUNSEN SUIT **DISCONNECTED**
FROM MAIN COMMUNICATION LINK.

CONDUCTING **FINAL ANALYSIS.**

SUIT READING FOR BERNARD BUNSEN: NORMAL,
HEALTHY, UNCONSCIOUS.

STATUS: UNCHANGED. SAFE TO PROCEED.

CLICK

YOU CAN COME OUT NOW, CLOVIS.

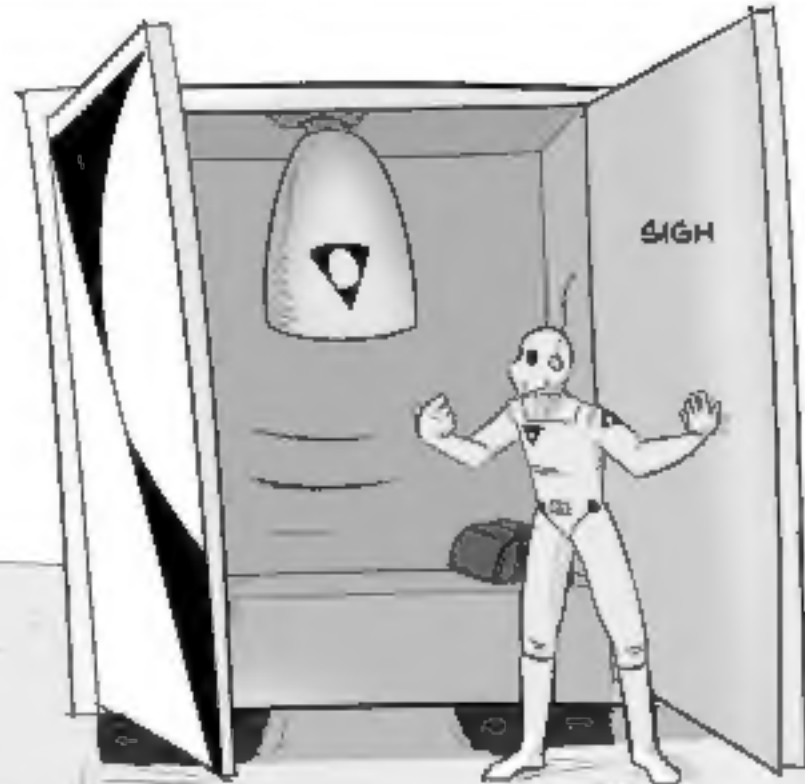
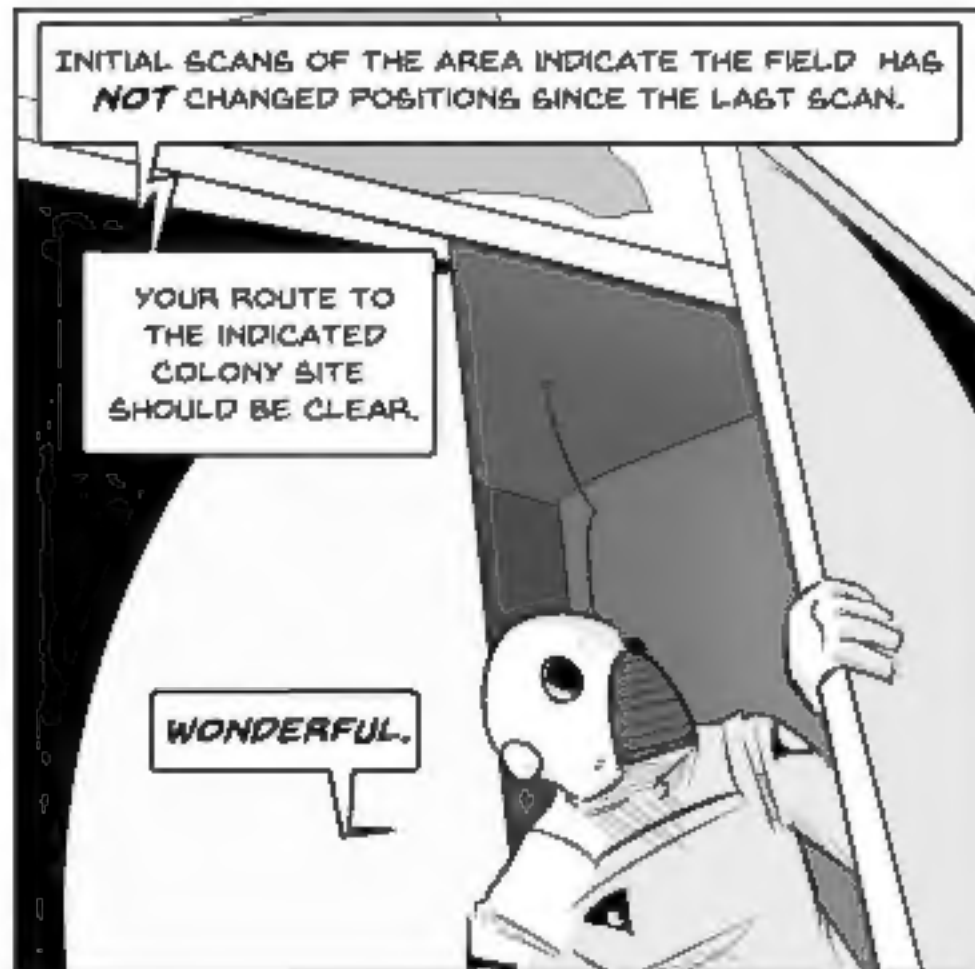
FINALLY...

I APOLOGIZE FOR THE WAIT.

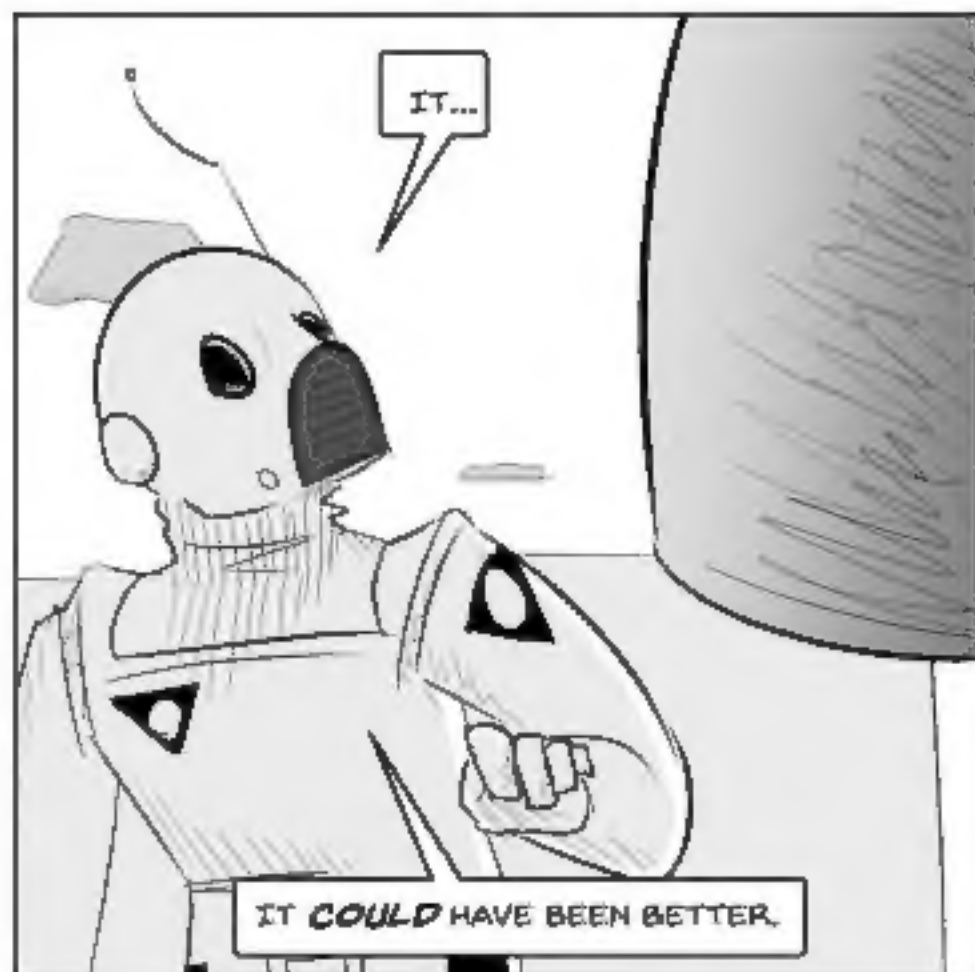
INITIAL SCANS OF THE AREA INDICATE THE FIELD HAS **NOT** CHANGED POSITIONS SINCE THE LAST SCAN.

YOUR ROUTE TO THE INDICATED COLONY SITE SHOULD BE CLEAR.

WONDERFUL.



SO, HOW WAS THE RIDE BACK THERE?



I'M SORRY. I TRIED TAKING IT **EASY** BUT...





OKAY, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE THE
HELMET OFF NOW CLOVIS.

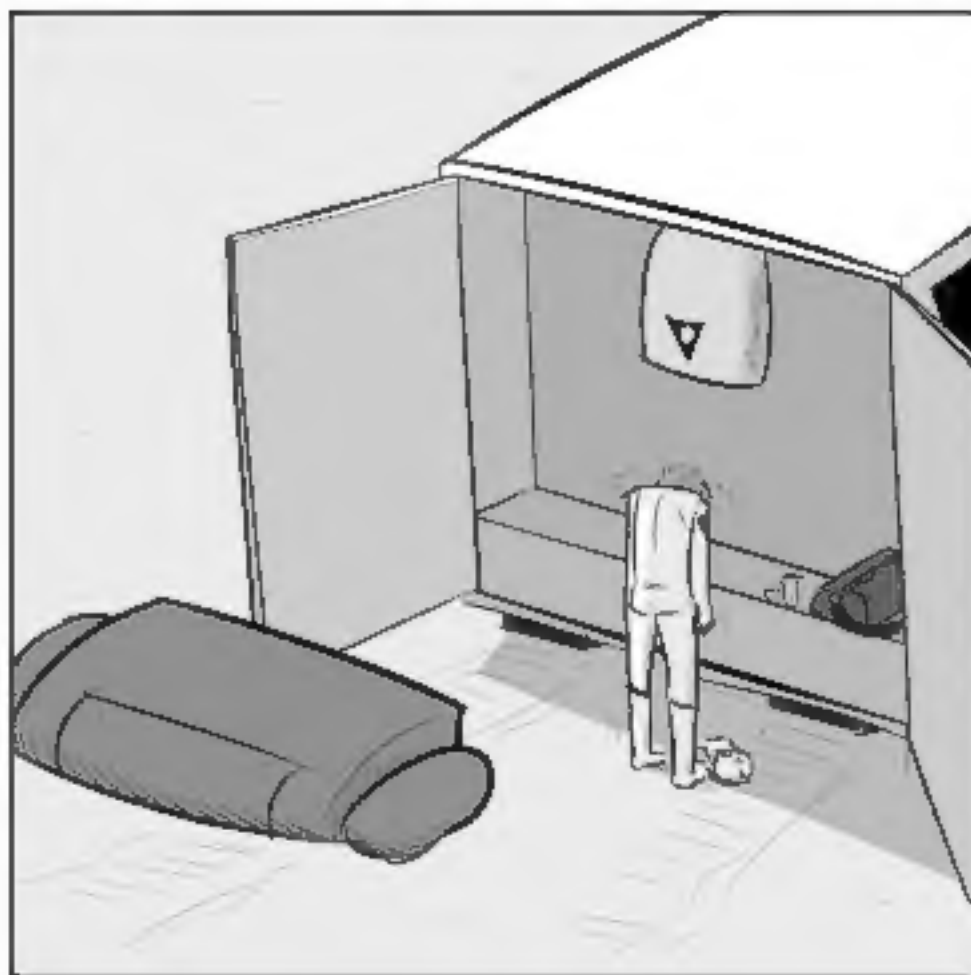


DON'T FORGET THAT YOU NEED TO TAKE OFF
THE COMMUNICATOR **BEFORE** YOU-

POFF!



CLOVIS?



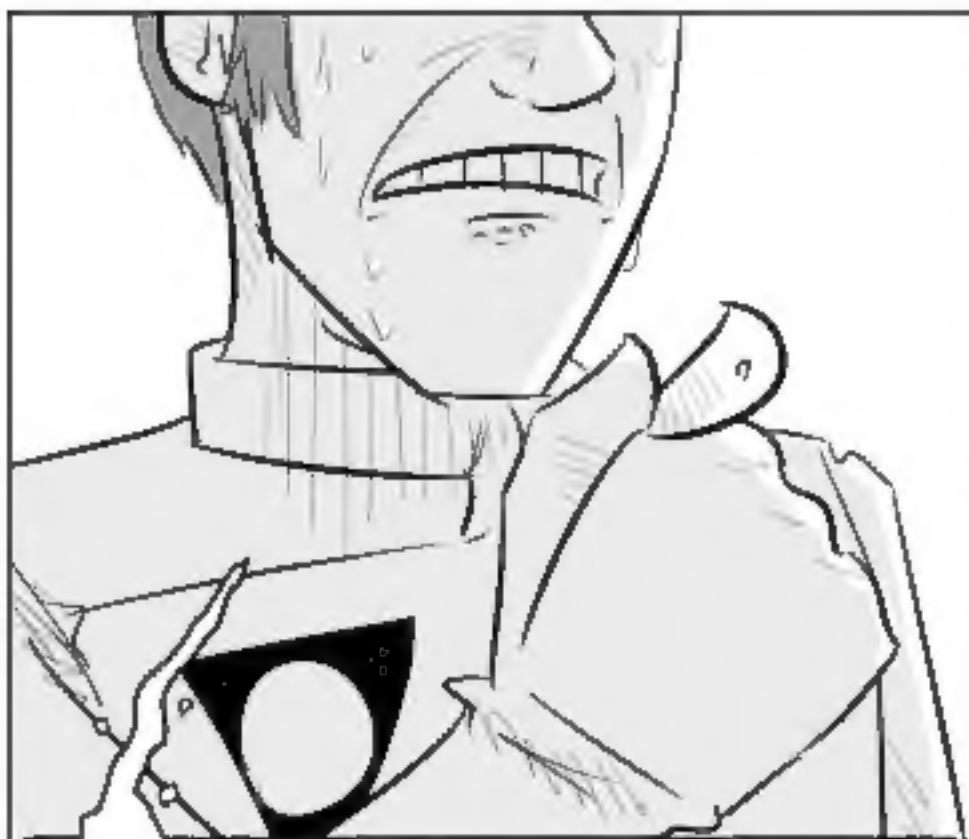
I CAN'T BEGIN TO SAY HOW OFTEN I USED TO DREAM ABOUT THE DAY I'D TAKE THAT **DAMN** THING OFF.



I DREAMED ABOUT THE **SMELL** OF THE SWEET AND FRESH AIR, SEEING THE BLUE SKY WITH MY **OWN** EYES AGAIN...



IT WAS GOING TO BE THE **HAPPIEST** DAY OF MY LIFE.



I WAS GOING TO TAKE IT OFF WITH **EVERYONE** ELSE! BERNARD, MARIA, WE'D ALL BE...WE'D **ALL** BE...

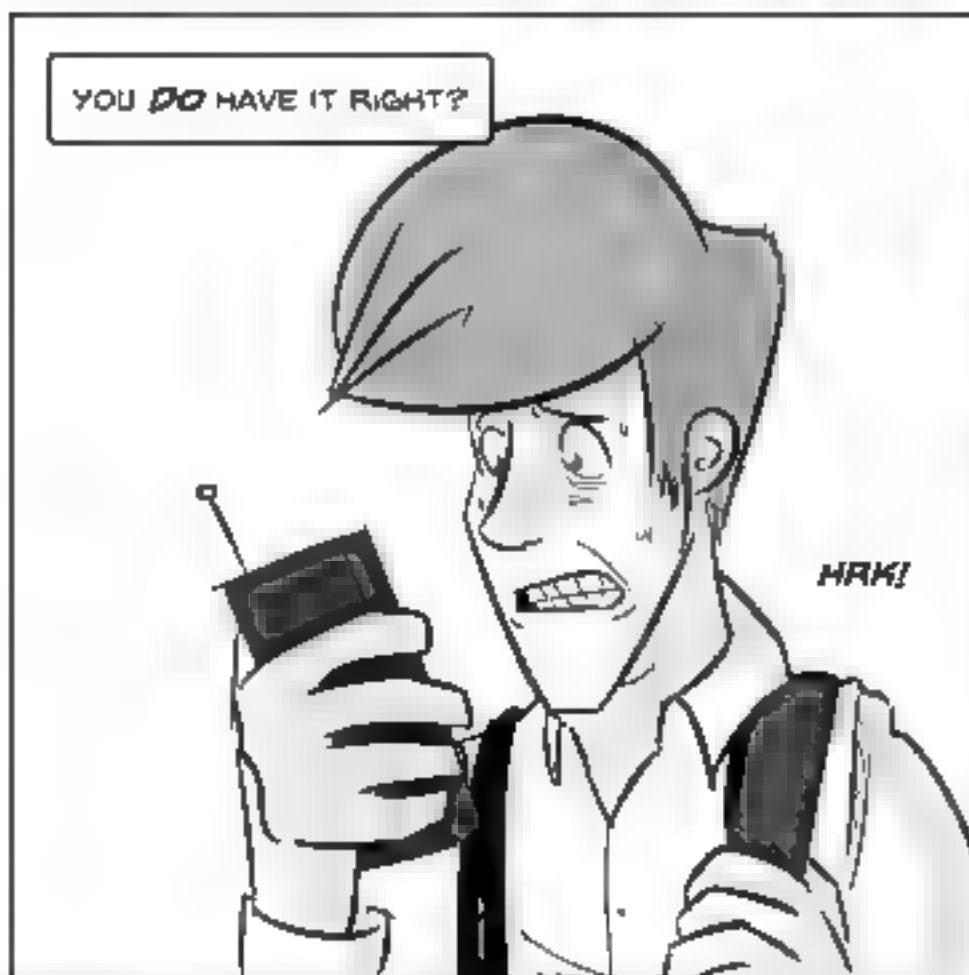
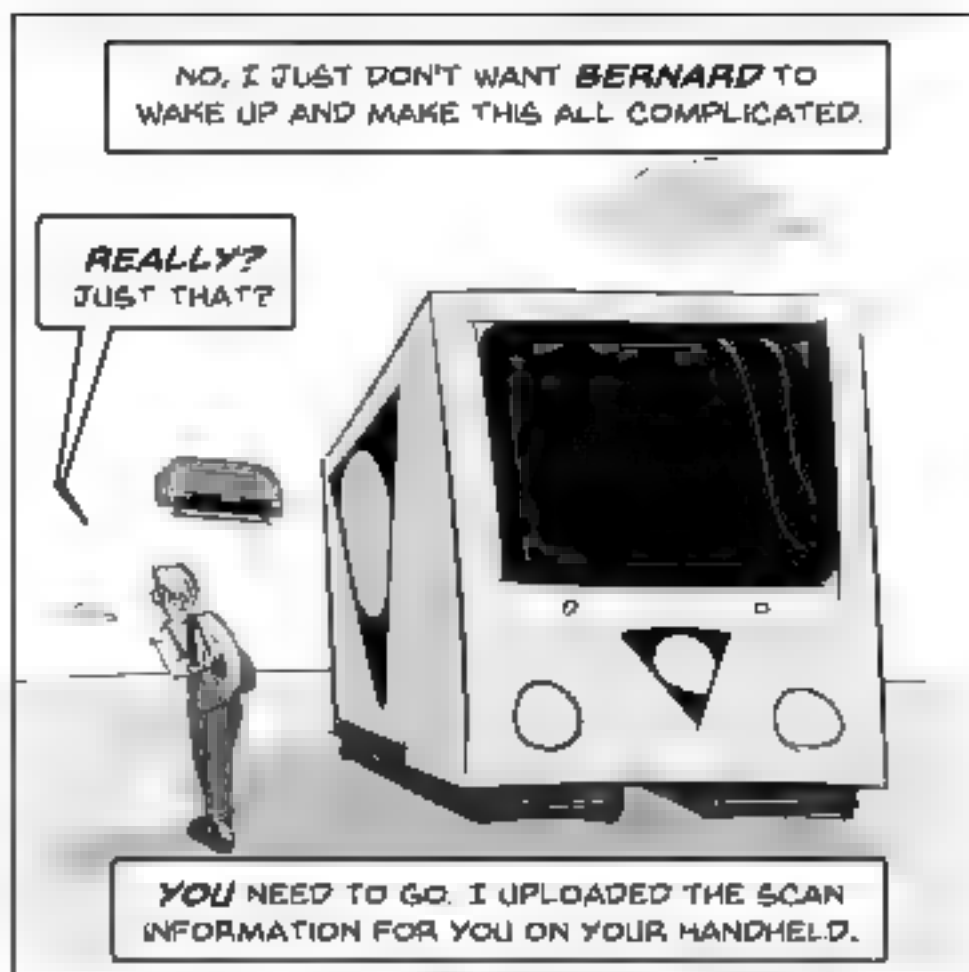
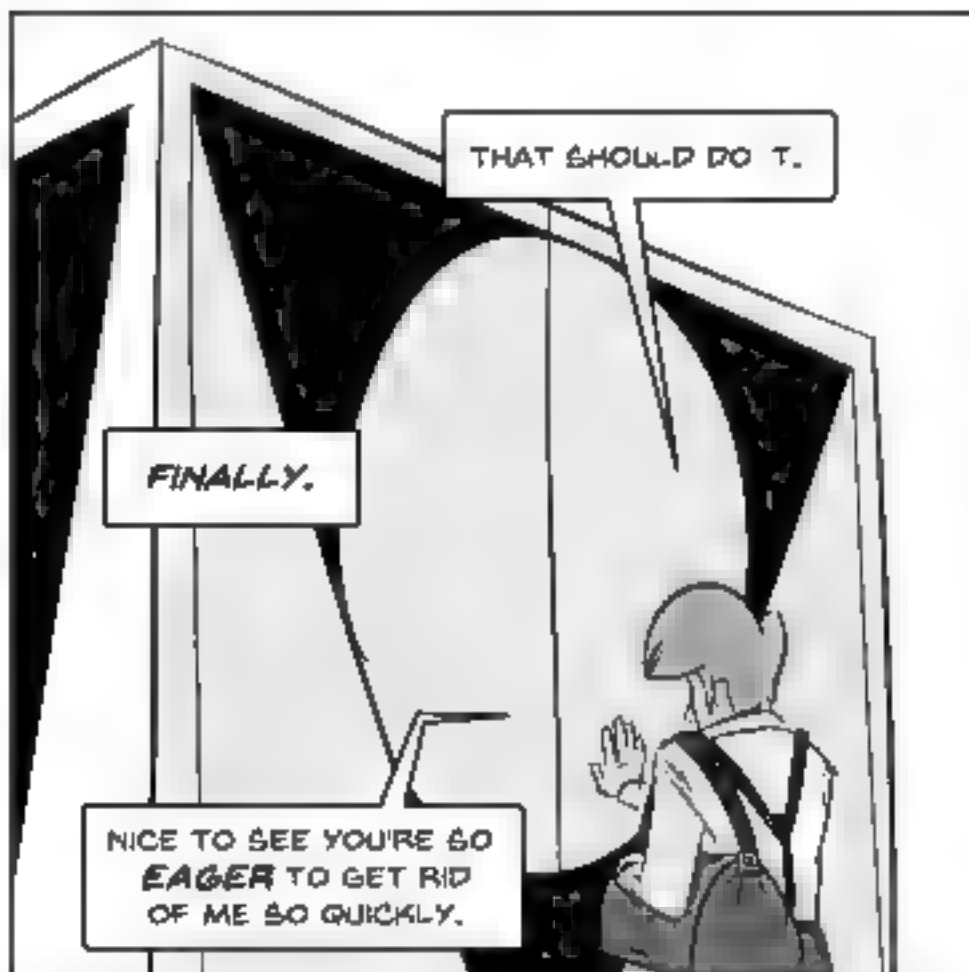
SO **HAPPY**...

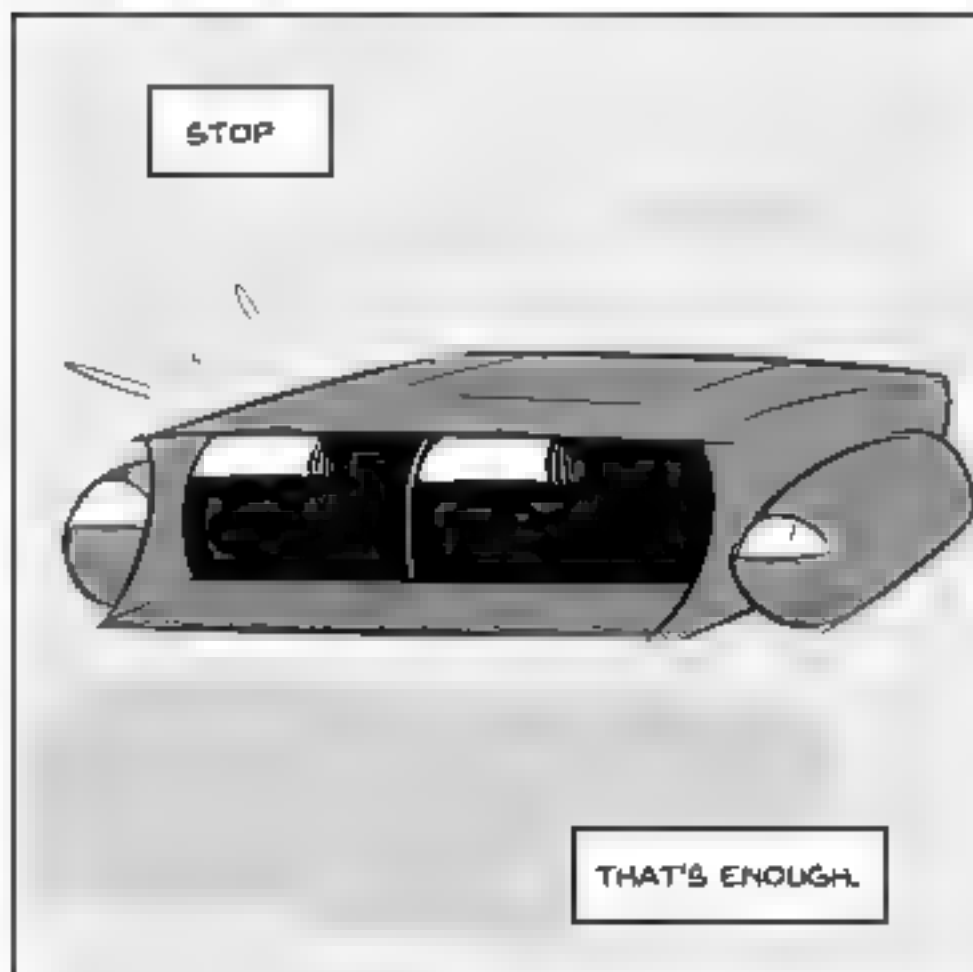




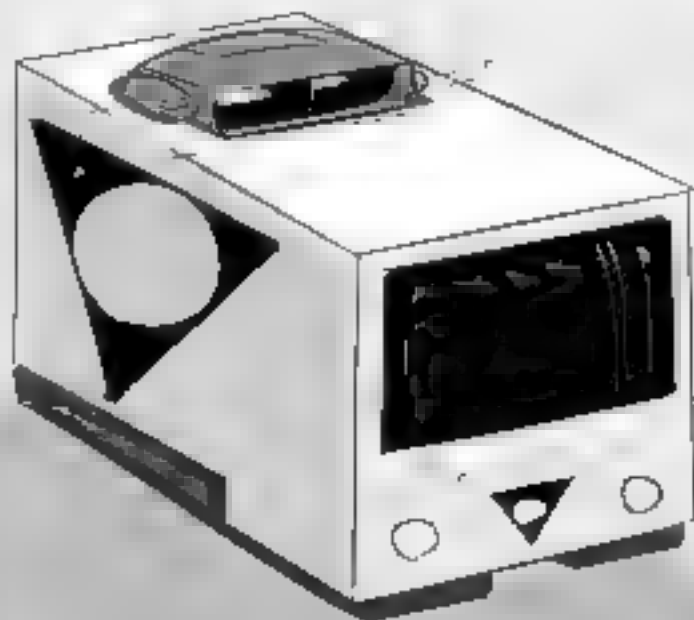








RECONNECTING MAIN COMMUNICATION LINK
TO BERNARD BUNGEN SUIT.



CONNECTION ESTABLISHED.

BERNARD?

SNORE

BERNARD?

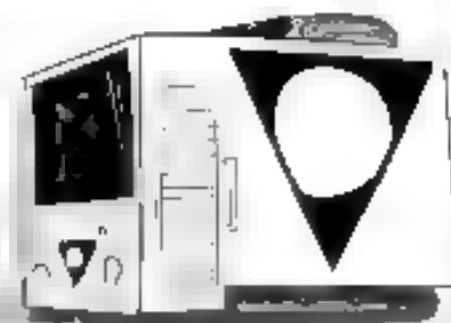
SNORE

BERNARD!

GUH?!

WHUZZ HAPPENIN'?!

NOTHING. WE'RE DONE HERE WITH THE SCAN
SO I'LL NEED *YOUR* GAY TO HEAD BACK.



OH...OKAY

HEADING BACK TO THE EL PASO HUB.
ESTIMATED ARRIVAL TIME: 6:24 PM.

THE SOONER WE GET BACK THE BETTER.



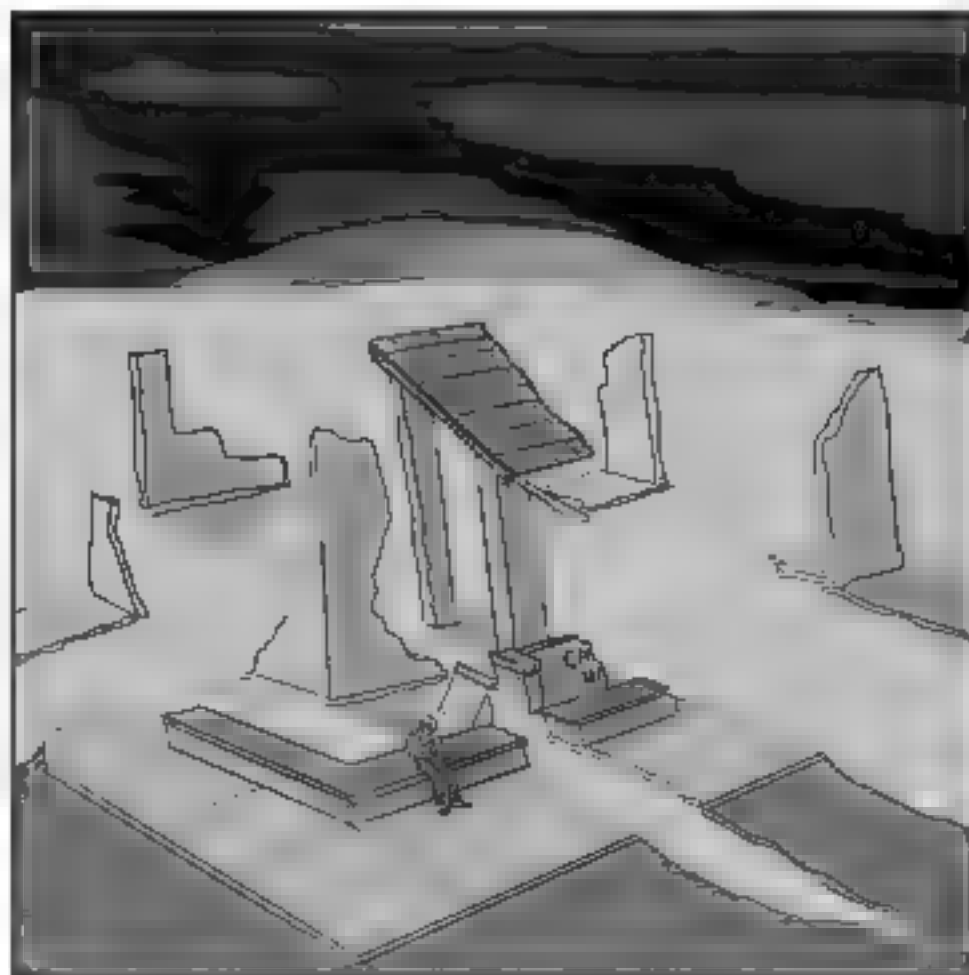
SO YOU CAN
SLEEP MORE?

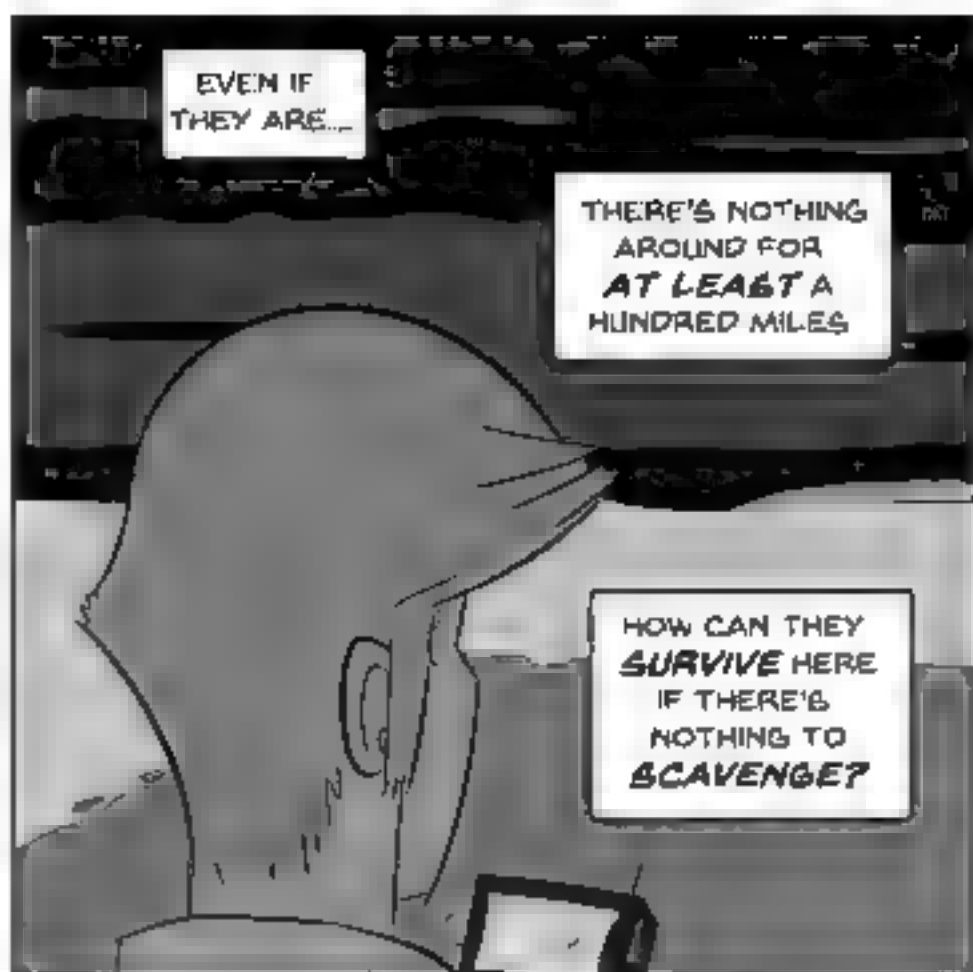
NO, SO I CAN FIND OUT IF MARIA
FOUND CLOVIS YET!

HE'S GOTTA BE SOMEWHERE...



A GUY JUST DOESN'T **DISAPPEAR** LIKE THAT, SUE.





WELL, I'M SURE I'LL FIND OUT ONCE I REACH
THAT COLONY ONCE I GET THERE I'LL-



CRICK!

CRICK!



JEZIS!!

MY LEGS!

DAMN.!



JEZIS, I DON'T THINK I'VE WALKED **THIS** MUCH
IN YEARS! MY LEGS FEEL LIKE THEY'RE GOING
TO FALL OFF AT THIS RATE....!

TSSSSST!



THE LEG CRAMPS FEEL LIKE THEY'VE GONE AWAY

FINALLY.

BUT...

JEZUS I'M SO DAMN TIRED .I SHOULDN'T
REST WHEN I'M SO CLOSE ALREADY.

BUT...

MAYBE ...I CAN *SLEEP* ...
FOR A COUPLE HOURS?

JUST...

UNTIL DAYLIGHT...SOUNDS...GOOD...

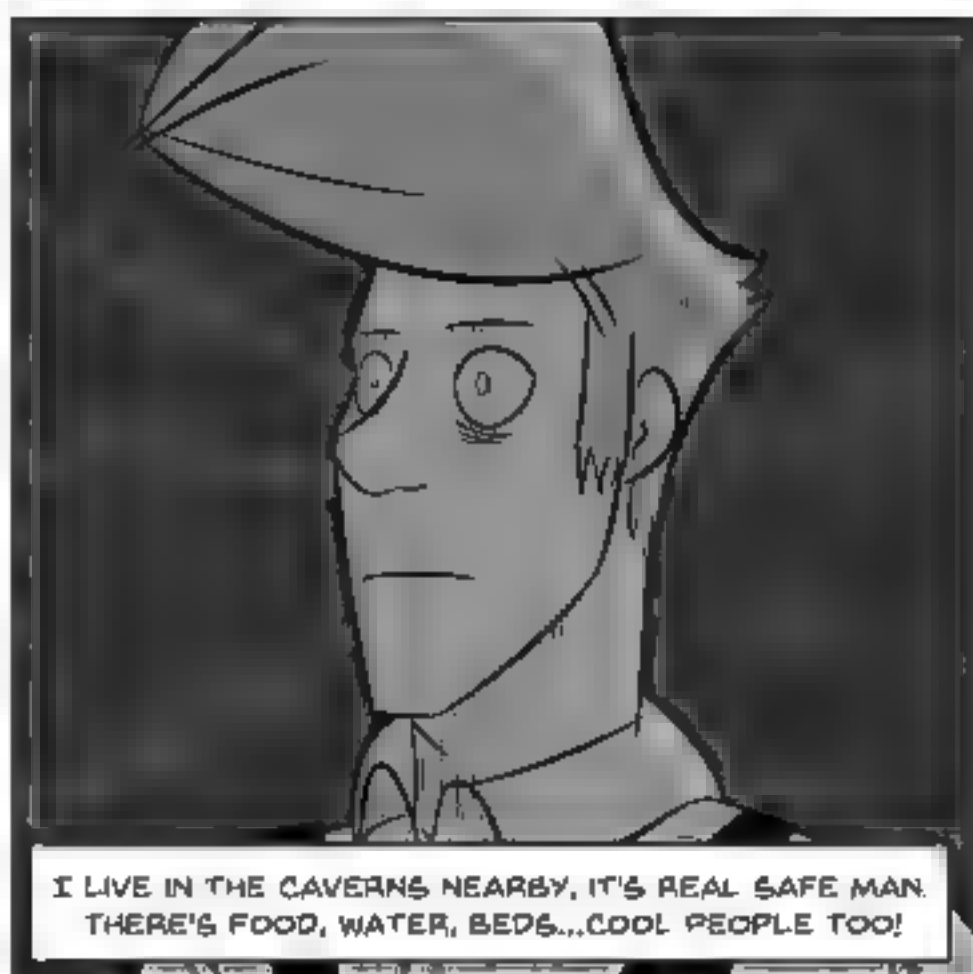












SO THEN AFTER THE MEETUP IN COACHELLA
I BUMMED A RIDE WITH SOME PEOPLE ON
A VAYCAY OUT HERE, THEY WERE **COOL** PEOPLE
YOU KNOW?

ONE OF THEM, JEFF, HE WAS A
NATURE GUY. **BIG** VEGAN, WHICH
I CAN RESPECT.

I'M A VEGETARIAN. LAST FIFTEEN
YEARS, MAN. I JUST **COULDN'T** GIVE UP
THE DAIRY. SHAKES WERE MY WEAKNESS.

NOT LIKE IT MATTERS
NOW, THOUGH...

UHHH, ANYWAY, YEAH JEFF! HE WAS A COOL GUY

WE STOPPED OFF HERE AND I WANTED TO
STAY LONGER TO **COMMUNE** WITH THE EARTH.



DEEP IN HER WOMB YOU CAN JUST **FEEL** THE
ESSENCE OF OUR PLANET'S LIFE.

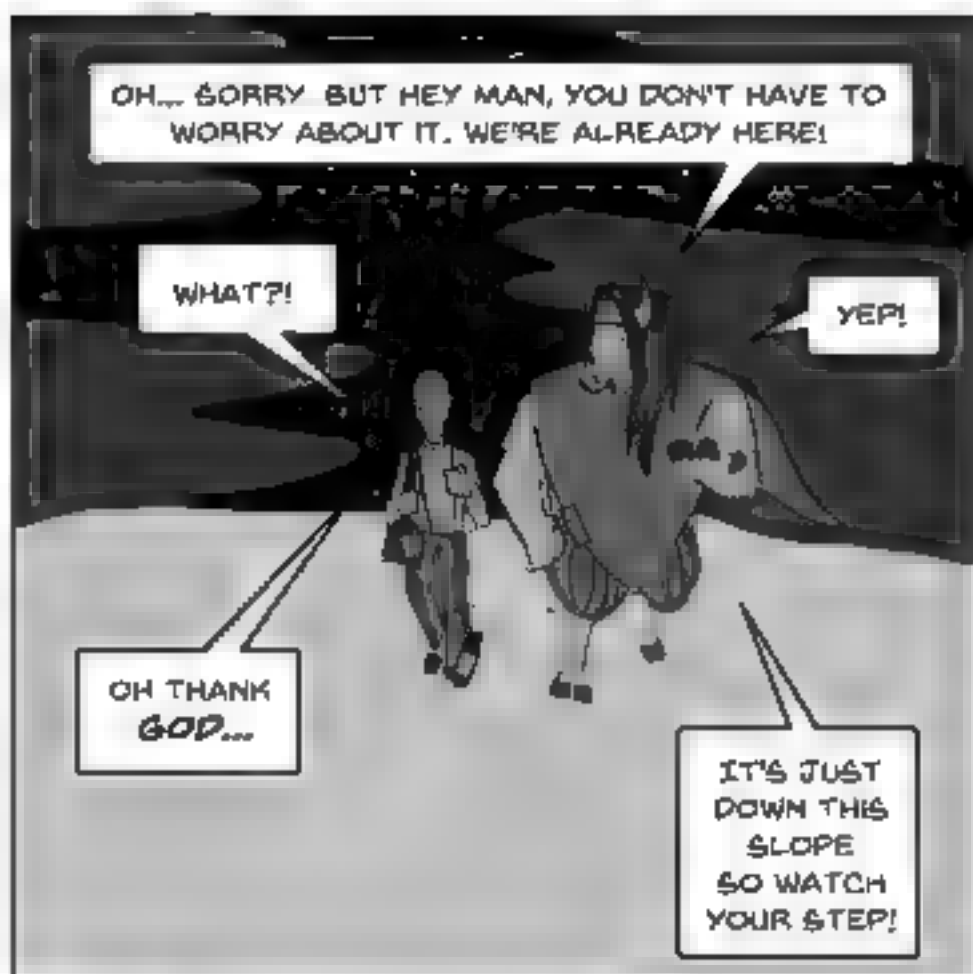
THERE WERE ALSO SOME
CUTE CHICKS AT THE
CAMPGROUNDS, MAN.
I WASN'T GOING TO
LEAVE SO SOON AFTER
SAYING HELLO.

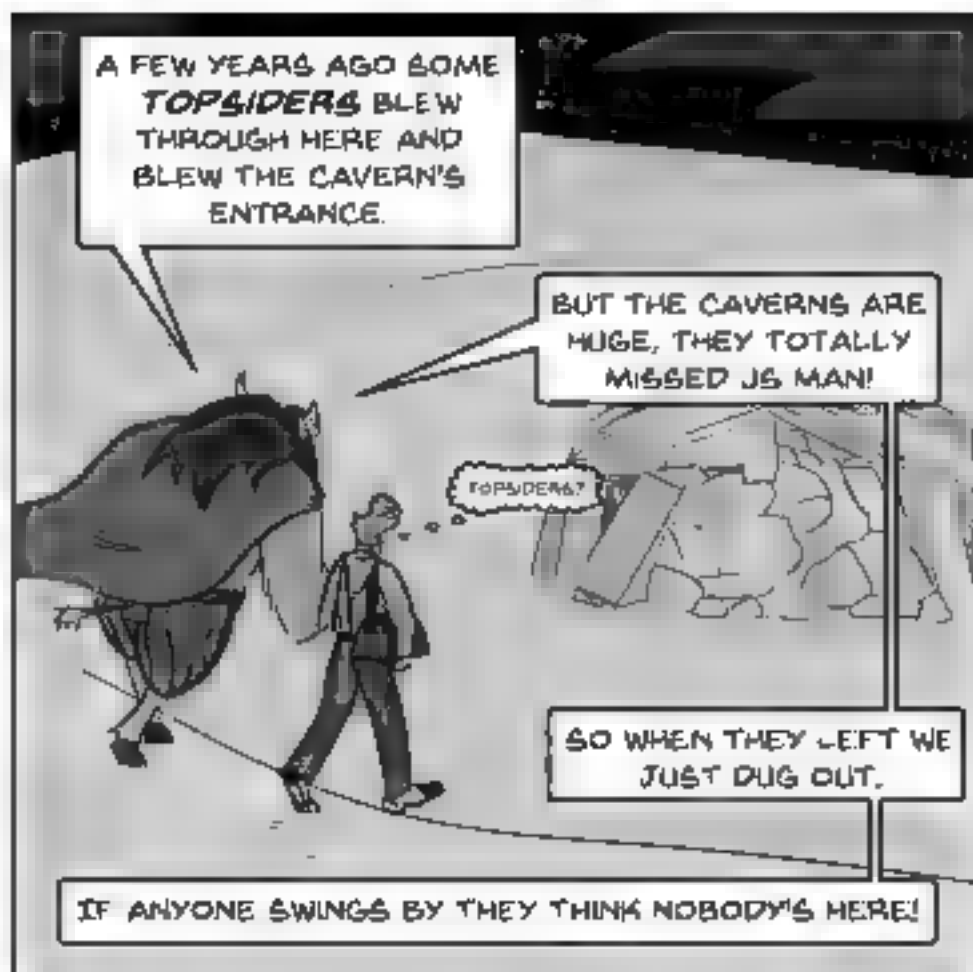
MAN, IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT...THOSE GIRLS
SAVED MY **LIFE**. I WOULD HAVE BEEN
HALFWAY TO FLORIDA WITH JEFF!

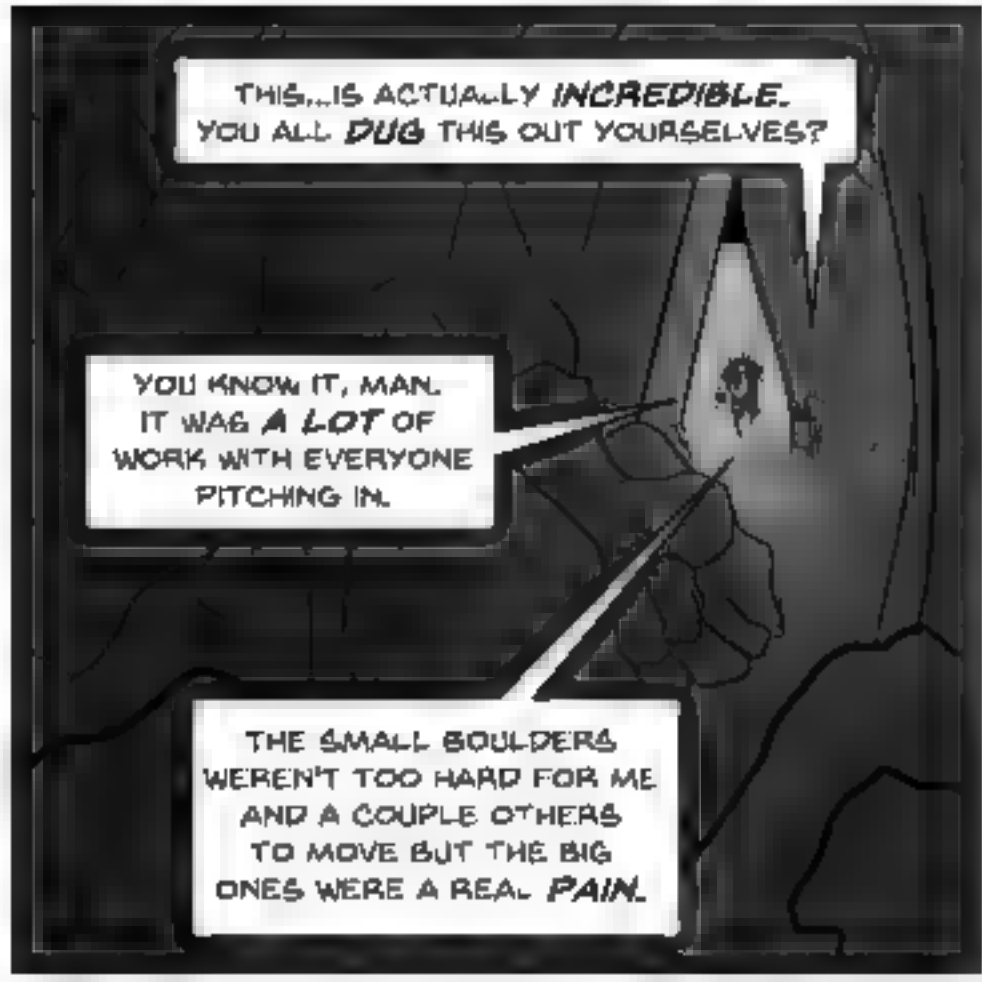
GOOD GUY, JEFF

GO THEN-

FOR THE LOVE
OF GOD ARE WE
THERE YET?!







THIS...IS ACTUALLY **INCREDIBLE**.
YOU ALL **DUG** THIS OUT YOURSELVES?

YOU KNOW IT, MAN.
IT WAS **A LOT** OF
WORK WITH EVERYONE
PITCHING IN.

THE SMALL BOULDERS
WEREN'T TOO HARD FOR ME
AND A COUPLE OTHERS
TO MOVE BUT THE BIG
ONES WERE A REAL **PAIN**.



DID YOU WORK IN THE
DARK TO DO IT TOO?

NAH, WE HAVE LIGHTS. IT JUST ISN'T SMART
TO HAVE THEM OUT FRONT FOR OTHERS
TO SEE FROM **OUTSIDE**. YOU KNOW?



THOUGH WE'LL HAVE TO WALK THROUGH THE
DARK FOR A WHILE UNTIL WE GET THERE...

I MEMORIZED THE WAY SINCE I HEAD
OUT TO STAND LOOK OUT A LOT.

BUT YOU'LL PROBABLY BUMP INTO PLENTY
OF THINGS ON THE WAY DOWN.

FANTASTIC.

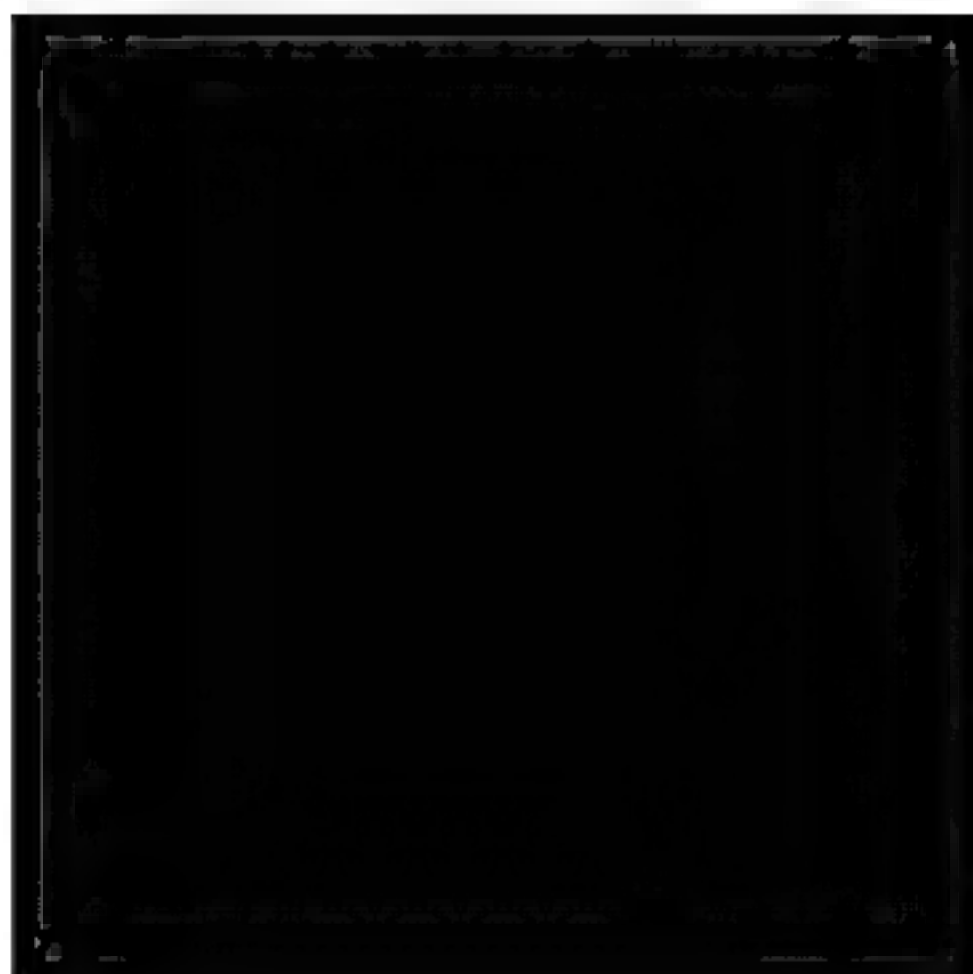


IF YOU DON'T
WANT TO
TRIP YOU CAN
HOLD MY-

NO.







THUD!!

OW...

THUMP!

...ARE WE THERE YET...?

WE SHHH- HEY!

AARON, MY MAN,
YOU'RE A SIGHT
FOR SORE EYES!

WHAT THE HELL
IS THAT?

I GOT A GUY HERE
I FOUND OUT AT
THE VISITOR CENTER!

THINK YOU CAN GIVE HIM SOME HELP?

HE MIGHT BE A LITTLE
BANGED UP BACK
THERE SO THANKS
FOR THE ASSIST.

BRAGZZZ

SAY HELLO TO AARON, MAN, DON'T BE RUDE
AND **STARE** AT HIM!





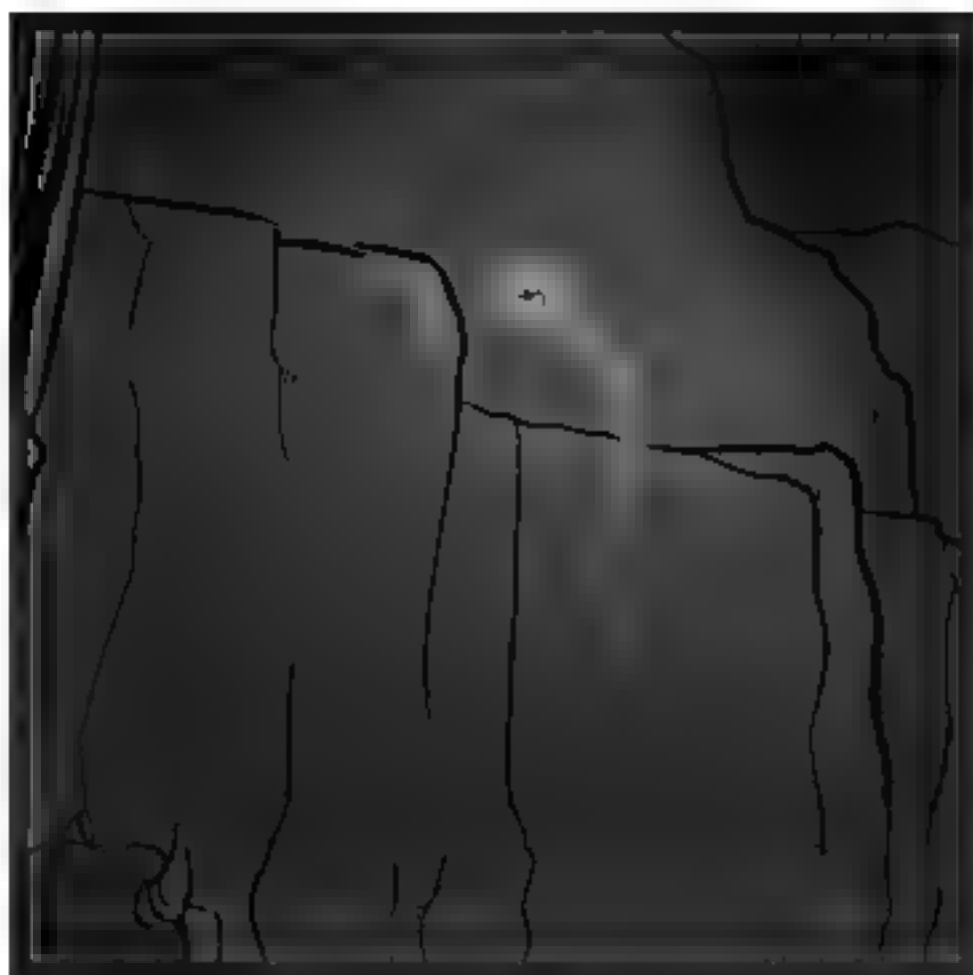
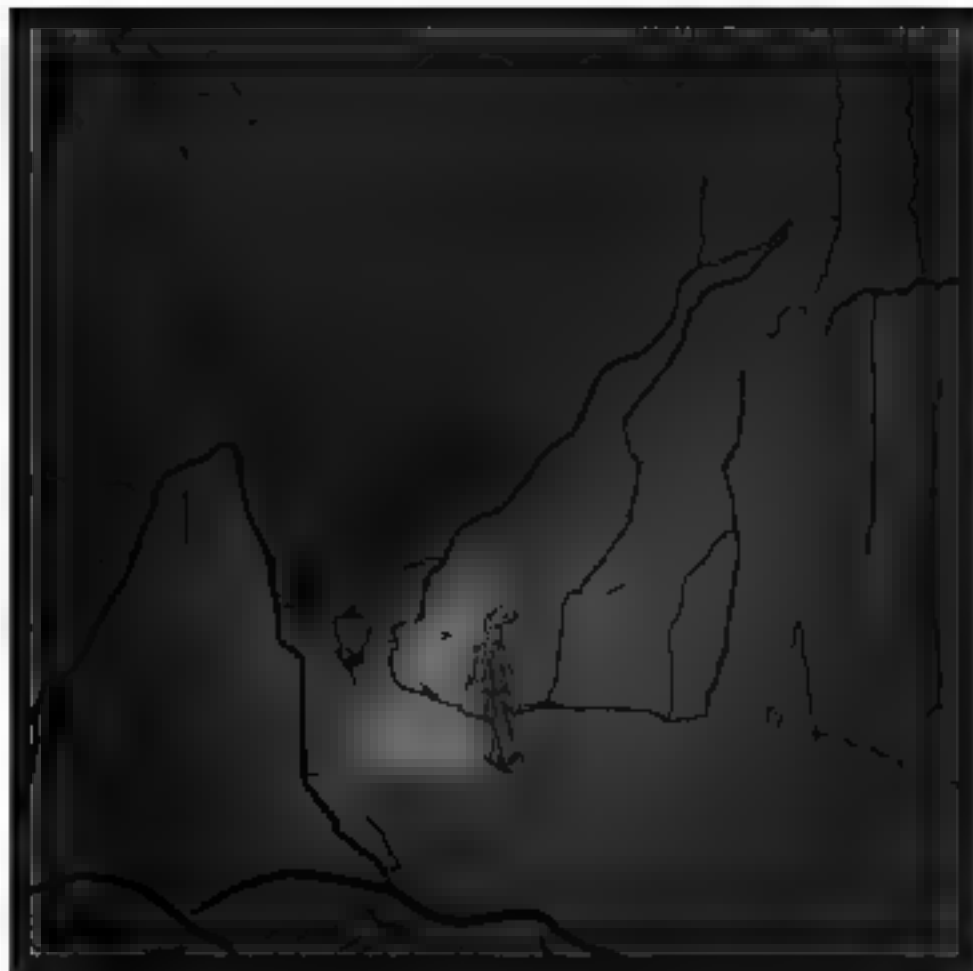
I DIDN'T MEAN IT
LIKE *THAT*, MAN.
COME ON.

SURE YOU DIDN'T.

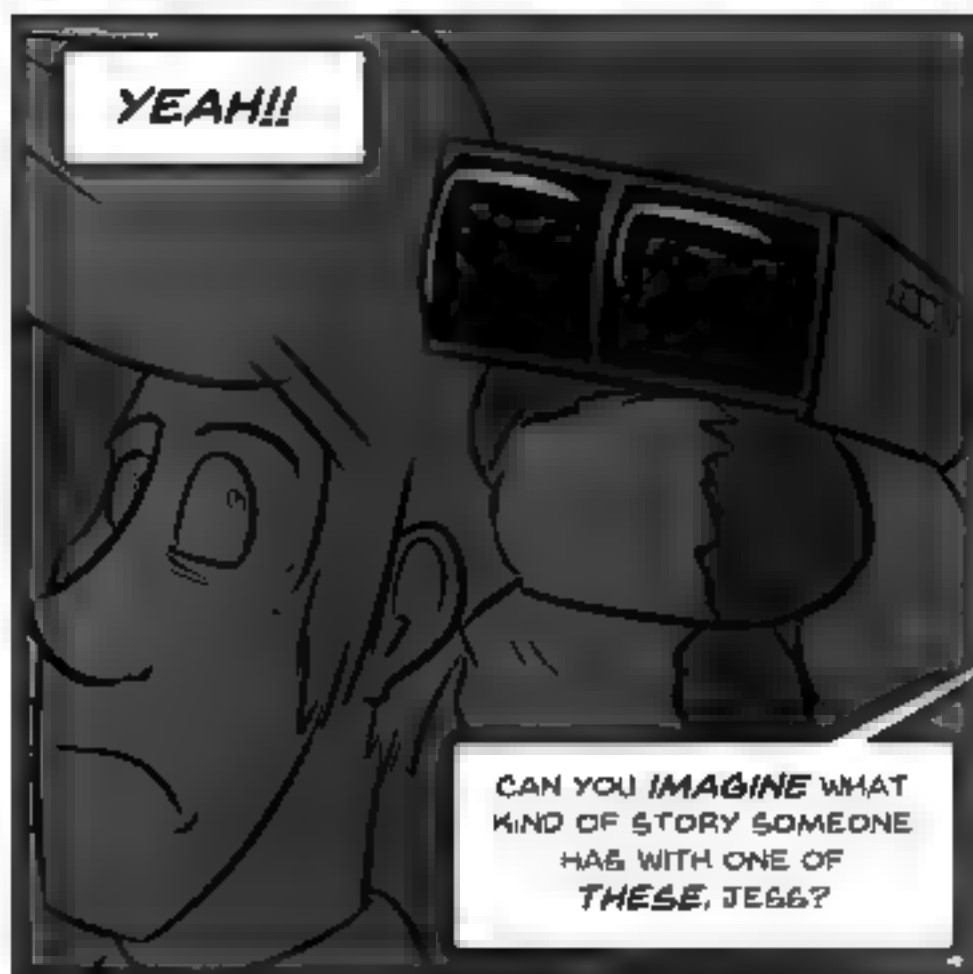
IT'S JUST
"FUNNY"

YOU KNOW I DIDN'T MEAN
IT LIKE THAT, RIGHT?

I MEAN, WHO EVEN CARES PEOPLE DON'T LOOK
LIKE HIM ANYMORE. YOU DON'T, DO YOU AARON?









SO JESS! CAN
YOU HELP A
GUY OUT HERE?

JUST TOSS DOWN
THAT LADDER AND
I'LL TAKE HIM
ON OVER TO-



ZIGGY!!

ARE YOU OUT OF
YOUR GOT-DANGED
MIND?!



THAT FELLA HAS A
TOPSIDER GUN
AND YOU BROUGHT
HIM **STRAIGHT**
TO OUR HOME?!

HOW DO YOU KNOW HE AIN'T ONE OF **THEM?!**



UHL...WELL...

I'M STILL ALIVE.
AREN'T I?

FOR
NOW!!









WELL IT GOES EITHER WAY, DOESN'T IT?

WE CAN'T KNOW JUST FROM A GUN AND THAT
LITTLE *FIT* OF HIS HE HAD BACK THERE...

DO *YOU* THINK HE'S FOR REAL, JESS?

I *HOPE* HE IS, HUN.

BECAUSE IF HE *ISN'T*...

GOD FORBID WHAT
COULD HAPPEN.